

MULTICULTURALISM: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation said, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."

Multiculturalism is an ideology that promotes the institutionalization of communities containing multiple cultures. India is the most diversified country in the world. The land where we have multi traditions, customs, languages, religions and practices. Multiculturalism has brought new trends into literature.

As per the 2011 census of India, there are 122 languages and 234 mother tongues. Writings of Indian sub-continent produced there in a variety of languages, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Bengali, Bihari, Gujarati, Hindi, Telugu etc., and the sacred writings like Vedas which were written in Sanskrit language and were considered as ancient literary forms. Prose commentaries like Bhramanas and Upanishads took its origin from Sanskrit only. The Sanskrit literature have had a long journey and influenced writings of that time and extended for about two centuries i.e., from 1400B.C to 1200 A.D., and carved a niche of itself in bringing development in literary writing and sacred writings from 1st to 4th century A.D.,

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INTRODUCTION

Origin and Development

David Gress of FPRI surveyed the multicultural aspects of Greek and Roman civilization. As a starting point he turned to the epic hero Odysseus, who in his ten years struggle to return home after the Trojan war, was said to have seen the cities of many people and known their minds.

As a myth and symbol, Odysseus presents two contrasting attitudes to discovery and alien cultures. One is of Odysseus as anthropologist a man open to strangers. In this sense he prefigures Greek philosophy and democracy, with their basis on questioning inherited beliefs, norms and customs. The other face of Odysseus is that of the man who seeks only that which points, homeward and is thus not genuinely multicultural.

The Greek encountered multi civilizations in the Hellenistic era which happened in the 4th century B.C., Hellenistic era had all capabilities of ruling and conquering. And having capabilities of knowing other civilizations but they were lacking command of languages and faith on their own wisdom. So multi civilizations and cultures shall be explored and imbibed basing on multi characteristics.

As it is defined by historians, population (groups of people) of certain places made civilization. People to live amicably in civilized societies rules may not be paid lip service. People have to follow rules strictly. But in the process of development as time changes the mindset of the people changes automatically. Their mindset attracts to different cultures. People will cherish their differences mainly in advanced, urbanized and global societies. Not to have these deviations and differences rules to be modified to attract people and not to get deviated from the existing societies.

‘Multiculturalism’ had been happened in Indian society for thousand years. When we date back to thousand years B.C., the Indo-Aryans invaded Hindukush; they had followed Indus valley culture, which was originated in East Africa. At that time the Indo-Aryans observed Indus valley religion and culture which was a blend of Pre Aryan and Aryan cultures. This blend later on transformed into Hinduism and caste system as well. Now Hinduism is the massive multicultural form in India.

The British presence in India from 18th to mid 19th centuries left a deep legacy in Indian culture, including its literature, Politics, Social structure and differences in major religions.

As a philosophical concept, it is rooted in the principles of democracy, social justice, equality and the affirmation of human diversity. In this ever changing society and world at large Multicultural Literature is a propeller and Ink to the aspiring writers to explore new concepts and to bring modifications as per the requirement of the people and society.

The aim of multicultural policies is not to preserve tradition, however, but to protect cultural liberty and expand people’s choice-in the ways people live and identify themselves and not to penalize them for these choices. Preserving tradition can help to keep the option open, But people shouldn’t be bound in an immutable box called “**culture**”.

Complex Identities: In Indian Literature

Multiculture literature offers students diverse perspectives. The Indian moral started with Bankim Chandra Chatarjee who rightly considered the father of the novel in India. His first novel **Rajmohan’s wife** (1864) presents mystery, suspense and romance. His other novel ‘the poison tree and Krishnakanta’s will deal with social problems. Rabindranath Tagore exerted a tremendous influence on the minds of the people with the choice of his themes. In the period of Tagore Regional Languages in India developed almost on parallel lines.

His successes Mulkraj Anand, R.K.Narayan and others carried the novel a little further by extending its range. Their pre occupations is with the down trodden and the destitutes. Their realistic and bold depiction of the missing of the learner classes foreshadows the best fiction of Mulkraj Anand in English.

Another significant development with the advent of Gandhiji’s on the political scene was the middle class taking an avid interest in creative writing, which earlier had been the monopoly of the upper classes. The literature of the eighties recognizes the plural Nature of society and the importance of national integration. It thus reflects the reality of the mixed Indian tradition.

Now cultures mingle, as is evident when characters of different nationalities interact with ease. As a result the whole world is projected as one big home.

The new individual is more cosmopolitan and deregionalised than in the novel of the 60’s and 70’s. The novelists of 80’s with their choice of themes and techniques share the vision and objectives of others post colonial writers for centuries Britons set up their institutions in the wilds and brought their culture to the world; now the world is bringing back

the wilds to British institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Multiculturalism is a common phenomenon in this Global world. As coin has two sides this concept combines and confronts peoples. It cannot be denied that it can bring culture clash. In this 21st century, technology has brought people on one platform. People of different cultures, castes, creed, colour, race and languages are living together as one family to continue this people has to get rid of negative thoughts of their culture.

Politicians, Religious leaders and Teachers are the harbingers to take this concept “Multiculturalism” forward. These people would confront with different groups of people of their segments. They have to strive to lessen the differences among their groups and avoid creating confusion among their groups. Of late people and business are gone global it is mandatory to follow cross cultural functions and operations across the globe. Companies have almost abolished rule of thumb approaches. To get cost and profit advantage its necessary to follow the proverb “when your are in Rhome be a roman”. First operational strategy of business houses is to cope with the socio political religious cultures of the different nations where they are operating and offer the suitable service or product to those cultures prevailing in a particular nation.

So many maestros and legends in music like Mangalampalli Bala Murali Krishna himself was a multi instrumentalist, vocalist contributed his services to establish multiculturalism in music and art. Charles Philip brown’s services are indispensable in bringing out Telugu language and literature to the light which is a major contribution to multicultural development. Books, Arts, culture, cinema, sports and technology are the real interfaces which enable and ensure multiculturalism.

Last but not least the current social media has a huge impact in bridging the gap between abstract theory and practice of multiculturalism.

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